



Mid-season Update

Lutheran Advocacy Ministry – Colorado and Voices for Justice have been working hard the past 70+ days and wanted to give you, our supporters, an update on how things were going so far this session and what it means for low-income Coloradoans.

House Bill 1008 eliminated Gender Rating in insurance policies. Previously women were charged double the rates of men for the same coverage. For many low-income women, this made the cost of insurance unaffordable.

End result – the bill was signed into law by Governor Ritter on Monday, March 29. Although it is unclear how many are low-income, an estimated 200,000 women will benefit in the individual market by this change.

Senate Bill 006 will make ID documents available for free to individuals leaving the Department of Corrections and county jails and also make Colorado Birth Certificates available to those who need it to apply for social service programs.

End Result – over 5,000 inmates leaving the corrections system will receive a free id, a necessary first step to getting a job, cashing a paycheck and hopefully becoming a productive member of society. Over 25,000 individuals are estimated to be helped by receiving a free birth certificate, again helping struggling Colorado families in need and helping them get back on their feet. The bill is waiting to be heard in House Appropriations.

Senate Bill 185 will give more protections to tenants in Colorado by: (1) eliminating the written notice for breach of warranty, and (2) local government notification, (3) expanding courts where tenants can go for relief, and (4) changing the retaliation provisions in the law.

End Result: Currently, a landlord is afforded more protections than tenants, allowing few mechanisms to bring the landlord in accordance with the law, and protection from retaliation by a landlord for tenants filing grievances. This bill will help many low-income renters who are more vulnerable to inhabitable living situations and retaliation from landlords. Senate Bill 185 passed the Senate Judiciary committee, and will be voted on by the Senate the week of April 12.

House Bill 1017 allows a public entity and private developer to enter into a voluntary agreement to provide affordable housing on a private residential housing unit in exchange for tax credits and waivers. This bill will help expand affordable housing across Colorado and clarify that voluntary agreements are not rent control, which is unconstitutional in our state. Without this clarification, such voluntary affordable housing agreements could be construed as rent control by state courts.

End Result: With the changes this law brings, more affordable rental housing, much needed to serve low-income communities, could become available. House bill 1017 passed the House, and Senate Judiciary committee, and set for a vote in the Senate this week.

Any questions or concerns, please contact:

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